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Journal of The American Institute of ARCHITECTS



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December, 1948

Guest Editorial by Henry S. Churchill

Fresh Meadows—a residential community

What Buildings Give You a Thrill?

Time for a Change of Fees

Ed Kemper Retires

Warren Powers Laird—1861-1948

The Convention Special and on to Mexico

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With the aim of amplifying, as through
a microphone, the voice
of the profession

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Contents

Guest Editorial	243	What Buildings Give You a Thrill? <i>By Edwin Bateman Morris</i>	272
The Convention Special to Houston and the Post-Convention Tour to Mexico City	244	Architects Read and Write: Entertaining <i>By Bolton White</i>	277
Warren Powers Laird—1861-1948	248	Philadelphia Looks New York Over <i>By Beryl Price</i>	278
News of the Educational Field	250	The United Nations' Headquarters <i>By J. J. P. Oud</i>	278
Time for a Change	251	"The Boss" <i>By Arthur A. Shurcliff</i>	280
By C. Godfrey Poggi		Do Architects Read and Write? <i>By Goldwin Goldsmith, F.A.I.A.</i>	280
Calendar	253	The Editor's Asides	281
Fresh Meadows	254	Index of Volume X	283
By Otto L. Nelson			
Honors	261		
Ed Kemper Retires	262		
Tributes by The Board of Directors, all living past Presidents, all living past Secretaries, and the present Officers			

ILLUSTRATIONS

Fresh Meadows, a residential community in Queens, Long Island, N. Y.	256, 259, 260
<i>Voorhees, Walker, Foley and Smith, architects</i>	
Edward Crawford Kemper, Hon. A.I.A.	269
Entrance Detail of a House in Weston, Mass.	270
<i>Office of Eleanor Raymond, architect</i>	

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No. 6

272

277

278

278

280

280

281

283

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Here is the fifth in our series of Guest Editorials. Instituted on the premise that a lot of high-pressure conviction is being bottled up for lack of a convenient outlet, these editorials appear to be serving as successive relieving valves. The opinions expressed will continue to be the uninhibited ones of the Guest who occupies a particular month's driving-seat. If you would express approval or disapproval of his argument, please do so in the JOURNAL. This month's Guest Editor is—

Henry S. Churchill

CHURCHILL-FULMER ASSOCIATES, NEW YORK

I RECENTLY RECEIVED a letter from an eminent architect asking, in effect, whether the study of social aspects, living habits, economics of housing and the like were really the concern of the architect.

It seems to me that they are, for these things affect architecture. Dean Burchard and Ernest Kump have pointed out how changes in other technologies affect the design of buildings and the relation of buildings to exterior space. The impact of social and economic changes are likewise important. This comes about through the larger scale of the architect's operations.

A large industrial plant is no longer simply a building to house

machinery and shelter a process. It is part of a complex that includes industrial relations, local taxation, the provision of amenities, and perhaps even housing for the workers. The owner now demands that the architect consider these matters as part of his program.

A school is not merely a place in which to learn the three R's by rote. It reaches out into and becomes part of the community because parents and teachers now insist that it should. The architect's client, the school board, demands that the architect consider these matters as part of his program.

A housing project, private or public, sets the way of life for hundreds of families. If it is to

be a success the architect must know how people wish to live, what the project must provide.

The responsibility of the architect is therefore no longer the simple one of planning a structure for a single purpose. He has, in effect, more than one client. There is the client who pays the bills, but beyond him are all the people who will use the physical things the architect designs. The social aspects must be studied, whether they are thought of as architectural considerations or not.

As a matter of course, all good architects have done this always. What has made it seemingly new is, I repeat, the change in scale and the increasing complexity. The warp and woof of our city patterns have so many strands that special effort must be made to understand them. The architect must understand what the pattern is, if he is to build well and, I may add, beautifully.

The organization of space is not

an abstraction. It is determined by the needs of people and the pressures of economics, and particular needs are determined by the techniques of our physicists and manufacturers.

My answer to my friend was that he cannot escape the social and economic aspects of our time any more than the master-builder could escape the liturgical aspects of the Church or than the military architects of the Renaissance could escape the new force of the cannon and the ferment of Humanism.

It is true that no one man can be a master of all that is implied in architecture today. The best he can do is to be aware; the greater his awareness, the more intuitive his knowledge, the better his work will be. The narrow specialist never exceeds his specialization; the wider a man's field of comprehension, the more likely he is to produce something that, in its interpretation of his time, can be called Architecture.

The Convention Special to Houston and the Post-Convention Tour to Mexico City

AN UNUSUAL OPPORTUNITY to combine attendance at the Institute's Convention with an early

spring vacation is offered this year, as the Convention City is located at the very edge of our good neigh-

DECEMBER, 1948

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bor, Mexico. The following information has been submitted by the United States Travel Agency, which has been authorized to conduct the Special Train to the Convention and the subsequent Post-Convention Tour.

As Houston, the Convention City, is located in one of the southernmost parts of Texas, the movement of several hundred delegates into the city within the short space of approximately 12 hours, when added to the normal traffic, heavily taxes the transportation facilities serving that section.

In order to insure delegates ample and adequate Pullman accommodations, The Institute has appointed the United States Travel Agency as sole official transportation agents to set up and handle all reservations in connection with special train arrangements to Houston, as well as the optional Post-Convention trip to Mexico City, Acapulco, Cuernavaca and Taxco.

Since Houston is so close to our southern good neighbor and as many members, being so close, would not wish to return home without seizing the opportunity of visiting Mexico, especially as the Convention falls in the height of the season to visit Mexico, the fol-

lowing arrangements have been planned, with the cooperation of The Institute's officers and Convention Chairman.

Briefly, the plan is to have special through Pullman cars operate from eastern cities and be attached to a special train which will leave St. Louis on Sunday, March 13.

The tentative itinerary is as follows:

CONVENTION SPECIAL TRAIN

Saturday, March 12: Leave Eastern cities.

Sunday, March 13: Convention Special departs from St. Louis.

Monday, March 14: Our Special arrives at New Orleans in the morning and our Pullmans are parked, with the privilege of our baggage remaining on the train.

Special arrangements have been made to view New Orleans, with its typical architecture, famous restaurants and old French Latin Quarter. This will provide an interesting break on the journey to Houston before we entrain again in the late evening for the Convention City.

Tuesday, March 15: We arrive in Houston in the morning in time to permit checking at our Convention hotels and proceeding to the first Convention sessions.

**TUESDAY - WEDNESDAY - THURSDAY-FRIDAY, MARCH 15-18—
CONVENTION SESSIONS**

Saturday, March 19: Members not planning to take the Post-Convention Tour may return to their homes on the railroads of their choice today.

**POST-CONVENTION TOUR TO
MEXICO CITY**

Saturday, March 19: Special airplanes have been set up by Pan American Airways to fly members directly following the Convention to Mexico City, a flight of approximately 3½ hours.

Upon arrival at Mexico City we will be met by limousines and escorted to the famous and fabulous new Del Prado Hotel, where double rooms with bath have been reserved for the group. The afternoon will be free to wander around this modern capital.

In the early evening a special cocktail party has been arranged and is included in the tour. Invitations have been sent to Mexican architects as well as to the College of Architecture, and it is expected a number of our good neighbors will be present.

Sunday, March 20: In Mexico. Our limousines with English-speak-

ing drivers and expert guides will call for us at the Hotel to drive us to the National Cathedral and other places of architectural interest within the City; thence on to Xochimilco for a delightful sail through the flower-laden canals of the famous "Floating Gardens." (Architects preferring to visit the Pyramids of Teotihuacan may do so instead of going to the "Floating Gardens." Local arrangements may be made in Mexico City.)

Our limousines will return us to Mexico City in time to witness the Bull Fight. Those not desiring this feature will be taken to the Turf Club for the balance of the afternoon.

The evening is free for dining in any one of Mexico City's famous restaurants.

Monday, March 21: Special flights have been arranged with Cia. Mexicana de Aviacion, the Mexican affiliate of Pan American Airways, to take all of us down to tropical Acapulco on the Pacific Ocean, the real "Riviera of the Americas." Acapulco is a tropical paradise, with lovely hotels, unexcelled natural beauty, beautiful sunsets and a world-famous climate of 78° the year round.

Tuesday, March 22: This day has been purposely left free for in-

dependent activity, such as bathing in the Pacific or in any one of the lovely pools of the respective hotels. Also, deep-sea fishing will lure many of the menfolk, as you are practically assured a sailfish for your memoirs. Sailfishing is considered one of the greatest game-fishing sports in the world.

Wednesday, March 23: Morning is free to drink in some more southern sunshine.

In the early afternoon our special planes will carry us back to Mexico City where our rooms have been reserved in the Del Prado Hotel.

Evening is free to dine in any one of Mexico City's famous restaurants.

Thursday, March 24: For those who cannot spare any more time in Mexico, reservations have been made to return them speedily to Houston for arrival in the early afternoon.

For those remaining over in Mexico City, private limousines will depart from the Hotel Del Prado shortly after breakfast to begin a two-day drive into the interior of Mexico, where stops will be made in Cuernavaca for special visits to several of the prominent private homes.

We shall continue our drive on

to Taxco, where overnight accommodations have been reserved for our party. Taxco is a city of cobblestone streets and buildings which have been unchanged by the progress of time through the past 300 years. Its quaint winding streets and typical architecture will be of particular interest to members.

Friday, March 25: Shortly after breakfast we continue our drive in our limousines over the scenic mountain roads, taking us up to 10,000 feet, then into valleys of rice fields, sugar cane, papaya trees and other native products.

Saturday, March 26: Today we are again in Mexico City to permit us time for last-minute shopping and souvenir hunting, as well as enjoying many of the colorful native markets and Indian peasant life in this city of contrasts.

Sunday, March 27: Special planes via Pan American Airways will be in readiness for our departure to return to Houston in the early afternoon, where we can proceed homeward via the route of our choice to our respective home cities.

A special descriptive brochure is being printed by the United States Travel Agency and will be forwarded to Institute members

shortly, permitting ample opportunity for all members to make early reservations and plan this as their late winter vacation.

How to make reservations:

Upon receipt of the descriptive brochure, along with reservation application blank, forward your request for reservations to the United States Travel Agency, 807 15th Street, N.W., Washington 5, D.C., attention Mr. John E. Smith, Jr., Manager, Convention

Department, giving the complete information concerning your party. You will be requested to make an initial deposit of \$50 per person to hold the reservation definite, but the balance of the tour money will not be required until February 15. It is of the utmost importance, however, that you make your reservations early. Immediately upon receipt of the announcement, reservations should be made, and in no case later than February 15 1949.



Warren Powers Laird, F.A.I.A.

DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

August 8, 1861 - February 18, 1948

THE NAME OF Warren Powers Laird stands in the front rank of the leaders in architectural education in this country, for he organized and built up the great School of Architecture of the University of Pennsylvania.

The School had its beginning when, about 1874, a course of instruction in architecture was provided in the last two years of the College course, which was continued until 1890; then the Uni-

versity recognized the need for a more balanced and extensive course of study and established a separate School of Architecture.

Search for a competent director for the new School led to Warren Powers Laird who was then a student in a Paris atelier, following his graduation from Cornell University and after a few years in architectural offices in Minneapolis, New York and Boston. He must have already established

something of a reputation as a student, for a cable message was sent him on the last day of the year 1890 calling him to take charge of the new School. Some forty years later he wrote: "It was a summons to high adventure for which, unknowingly, I had been preparing in school, office, and foreign study; a rare moment in life when opportunity spoke and the door opened toward a new vista, vague but alluring."

In the autumn of 1891 he assumed his duties as "Professor-in-Charge." It was a grave responsibility for a young man of only twenty-nine years, but he at once established policies which he adhered to throughout his long career as head of the School.

To him it was an axiom that architecture must be taught as a fine art. He wrote of himself: "I brought to Pennsylvania a conviction instilled by all my preparatory training, and later confirmed by a lifetime of observation: that Architecture is the Mother of Art, whose works are integrated of utility, stability and beauty, and which, lacking any one of these, ceases to be Architecture."

At the outset he was handicapped by the scarcity of trained teachers, but he gathered together a group

of young architects, artists and instructors in related subjects and built up a faculty and formulated an orderly curriculum. The policy he adopted and followed throughout required that each major division of instruction in professional subjects should be headed by a man of superior and well-proven talent and teaching equipment, with associates of special fitness to supplement his teachings.

In a surprisingly short time the reputation of the School was established and students came from all parts of the country and from abroad, until Pennsylvania came to be widely acknowledged as one of the leaders among American schools.

As the years went by, Dr. Laird never failed in his determination to build up the character and quality of the School, and he frequently consulted former students on policies and called on them for assistance in seeking teachers of outstanding ability. In 1916 he established, through contributions, three Graduate Fellowships a year for a period of five years, open to any student of an accredited school of architecture—thus laying the foundation for his plan, which was consummated in 1926, to

lengthen the course to five years, in order to provide a period of study in architecture sufficient for a well-rounded, technical as well as cultural education.

The next development he accomplished was the establishment by the University of the School of Fine Arts in 1920, to which were transferred the professional courses in architecture and music, and in which was set up the non-professional curriculum in Fine Arts, a cultural course with a major in art. Dr. Laird was elected Dean of the new School and held this office until 1932, when he retired with the title of Emeritus Professor of Architecture.

Dr. Laird acquired a national reputation as a professional consultant and advisor to many state, municipal and private institutional bodies in this country and Canada. He was raised to Fellowship in The American Institute of Architects in 1915, not only because of his success as an admin-

istrator of the School at the University of Pennsylvania, but for his service to the profession in raising the ethical standards of architectural competitions. In 1911 he received from the University the honorary degree of Doctor of Sciences.

From the beginning, Dr. Laird won and held the respect and confidence of the students and faculty to an amazing degree, and he knew them all personally. To the end of his long life he never forgot or lost interest in the career of those who passed through the School. He had the capacity for warm affection and friendship and he justly earned the sobriquet of "Popsy" which his pupils applied to him in the very first years of his professorship. This pet name clung to him to the end.

Of Warren Powers Laird may it be truly written that he earned the encomium of Chaucer:

"And gladly wolde he lerne and
gladly teche."

—JOHN P. B. SINKLER, F.A.I.A.

News of the Educational Field

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, College of Architecture and Design, announces the appointment of Jerrold Loebl, Norman J. Schloss-

man and Richard M. Bennett of the firm of Loebl, Schlossman and Bennett, Architects, of Chicago; and K. Lonberg-Holm, Director

DECEMBER, 1948

of Research, F. W. Dodge Corporation of New York, as visiting critics in Senior Design for the current semester.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS an-

Is the six-per-cent basic fee out
of scale with the times? This New
Jersey architect has his doubts

nounces the appointment of Cecil Clair Briggs as a half-time Professor of Architecture. Mr. Briggs was formerly a member of the faculty of Columbia University and also of Pratt Institute.

Time for a Change

By C. Godfrey Poggi

MANY ARCHITECTS now seem to feel that there is something wrong with our time-worn method of determining fees and our practice in general; that it is time for a change, but thus far no one has offered any suggestion insuring real sound improvement. Neither has anyone thus far hit upon any definite reason why any change should take place.

Nevertheless, the present method does not appear to fully meet present-day requirements so far as the public is concerned, and without doubt the general public is our boss.

We can get together at meetings, conventions and conferences and set up arbitrary standards designed to govern the public in this regard, but when not based on precedent, in the final analysis, the

dictates of the public govern us and we meekly succumb.

There have, however, been two elements of architectural practice which the public has thus far been unable to break down. The first is the fact that plans and specifications, as instruments of service, are the property of the architect. This is unfortunately now nonexistent due to the merchandising of plans, and it is the result of extreme disloyalty on the part of many architects to the profession at large. This stronghold has been beaten down, not by the public, but by the architects themselves. In short, in this respect the architects have fouled their own nests.

The other, also a precedent, is still existent and that is our A.I.A. standard of fees and charges, and the fact that this is a long-term

precedent is our anchor to the windward. Many a court case has been decided in favor of the architect because of the age of this precedent.

Being on such sound ground, the question naturally arises, why make any change at all? What's the matter with this age-old set-up?

There is nothing wrong with our procedure as a whole but under present-day working conditions the detail of our procedure is too complicated and involved.

In the first place, we have a recommended basic charge of 6%. This has become an established custom and is therefore perfectly legal. John Q. Public does not object to that. What he does object to are the extras.

Why should he have to "pay extra for a clerk-of-works?" He expects that the architect will "look after the work." Then again why should he "pay extra for engineering in any category?" "Doesn't the architect know his business?" "Doesn't he know how to construct what he plans and designs?" "What sort of a gyp is this anyway?"

What architect has not experienced this type of static and not

worn himself down to the bone making explanations?

The fact of the matter is that the public is now demanding a "one-package job," and to meet that demand our remedy is the simplest thing in the world and without in any way endangering precedent of long standing—our anchor to the windward.

All we have to do is to raise our basic fee from 6% to 10%, or to 12% if considered better, and include engineering and clerk-of-works, as within the scope of that fee. Just eliminate the fussbug elements. This, as before, can come from The A.I.A. as a recommended basis of charge, based on finding that such charge is the minimum necessary to insure proper service to the client and a living wage to the architect. Practically all else within our code of ethics can remain as is, including the right to make higher charges for monumental work and to meet special circumstances.

Someone or more might attack this proposal on the ground that where engineering and clerk-of-works are not needful, the architect would, at a 10% or 12% basic rate, receive compensation for service not rendered.

On its face this seems true, but

those jobs not requiring engineering and clerk-of-works come within the "small-job" category such as no architect can today afford to undertake at less than a fee of 10% or 12%, hence we are entitled to receive those rates for that type of work.

In short, by merely raising the recommended basic rate, a double purpose will be served, and I am sure that we will gain rather than continue to lose the respect of the public.

An added advantage is the fact that we will thus have definite personal control of both the engineer and the clerk-of-works, particularly when public or institutional work is concerned.

Generally speaking, I am not in favor of any suggested cost-plus-method of making charges. First,

because in making advance estimates, such will invite price competition as between architects.

Second, due to the ignorance of the public as to an architect's overhead, our payrolls and overhead generally would not be above suspicion.

Last but not least, because we would thus "lose our birthright" which is our long-standing court precedent. While none of us ever anticipates suing a client, nevertheless, there are still enough rascals extant too willing to skin the architect, making it highly advisable that we keep our guard up and in a defensive position at all times.

There is no doubt it is time for a change, but while we are about it, let's do it with caution a forethought.

Calendar

December 1-4: Semiannual Meeting of The Board of Directors, A.I.A., Cloister Hotel, Sea Island, Georgia.

December 9-10: Thirty-fifth Annual Convention of National Warm Air Heating and Air Conditioning Association, Hotel Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio.

January 24-28, 1949: Ninth International Heating and Ventilat-

ing Exposition, under auspices of the American Society of Heating and Ventilating Engineers. International Amphitheater, Chicago, Illinois.

February 20-24: Annual Convention and Exposition of the National Association of Home Builders, Stevens Hotel, Chicago.

March 15-18: 81st Convention of The American Institute of

Architects, Rice Hotel, Houston, Texas.

March 29-April 1: Third International Lighting Exposition and Conference. Sponsored by Industrial and Commercial Lighting Equipment Section of National

Electrical Manufacturers Association. Stevens Hotel, Chicago, Illinois.

June 29-July 2: The annual conference of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Nottingham, England.

When a life insurance company decides to become a landlord, what is its attitude towards the tenant of today and tomorrow?

Fresh Meadows

AN EQUITY INVESTMENT BY A LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

By Otto L. Nelson

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

IT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED that the viewpoint and early experience of a life insurance company in constructing and operating rental multiple housing developments might be of interest to architects generally. What does or what should an insurance company especially seek in the planning and design of rental housing as an equity investment? A partial answer may be found by examining what the New York Life Insurance Company, as the owner, is attempting at Fresh Meadows, where on a 170-acre tract in Queens, Long Island, 3,000 apartment units are provided in two thirteen-story elevator buildings, 68 three-story buildings and 72 two-story buildings. In addition

to these living accommodations the development includes a main shopping center with a department store, theater, banks, post office, professional building for doctors and dentists, shops, specialty stores, and parking facilities for 1,000 cars. There are also two smaller neighborhood shopping areas in this residential community of some 11,000 people.

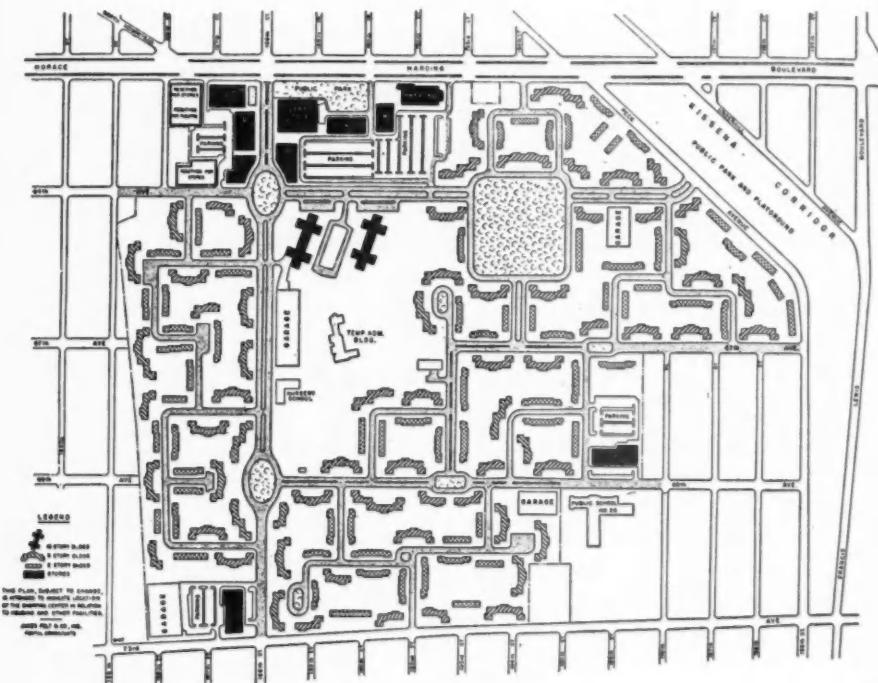
In planning Fresh Meadows, probably the most important factor in our approach was the sobering thought that the Company's Housing Department was responsible for building rental housing with which the Company, as landlord, would have to live, for better or worse, for at least fifty years. This realization served to empha-

size how irrevocably good or bad the basic decisions in design were bound to be. It explains the emphasis which has been placed on the role of the architect, not only in terms of dwelling unit design but also in site and community planning. There has been faith in the ability of the architectural profession to provide that utility, beauty and economy in design which would assure a sound investment for the Company, both in terms of financial return and in terms of good public relations resulting from satisfied tenants. Considerably more than the average amount of time and money has been spent in architectural planning and design, and by that emphasis it is to be hoped that Fresh Meadows will be a good place for families to live, not only for the present but for a half a century or more to come.

The greatest problem in what might be called the insurance company's long-range approach is to achieve the goal of good planning and design and yet not to let costs run away to the point where the end result is a monumental white elephant. In these days of high construction costs there is the temptation to turn to the building contractor and let him

d dictate to the architect what must be done and what must be sacrificed to bring costs down. Admittedly, the necessary compromises between what one would like to build and what one can afford are indeed difficult. At Fresh Meadows, wherever compromises would have meant a serious sacrifice of good planning and good design, they were not made and the higher cost was accepted as the better solution in the long run.

It is our hope and belief that the long-term investment concept has been safeguarded by planning Fresh Meadows not merely as "housing" but as a complete residential community for a healthful and pleasant life for the whole family —particularly the family with children. The 170 acres are sufficient to permit the development of a distinct neighborhood in itself, and to protect it to a large extent from the obsolescence that occurs when a few buildings, by neglect and deterioration, cause an entire surrounding area to suffer and decay. At the same time an effort has been made to avoid an institutional and stereotyped look by varying the buildings in height and type, and by such means as using different shades of brick, yet without



The site plan of Fresh Meadows, a residential community in Queens, Long Island, N. Y.; Voorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith, architects

sacrificing economies to be obtained by repeating basic design types.

Again, the long-term investment concept is evident in the site planning. The density is less than twenty families per acre, and in spite of 140 two- and three-story buildings, the land coverage is less than 15%. This opening up of the site was helped materially by placing 624 apartments in the two

thirteen-story buildings. It has been possible to leave a large open area in the vicinity of these buildings and to retain an existing six-acre grove of large-sized oaks and maples. An attractive residential atmosphere has been sought through spacious planning. In the two-story buildings, each apartment has its own terrace reached by a door from the living-room and facing

the interior lawn and landscaped area. Here, by the use of hedges, outside privacy can be achieved without sacrificing the community need for sizeable lawns and common sitting and play areas.

The main shopping center and the two neighboring shopping areas were provided not only to give our tenants needed facilities, conveniently at hand, but also to yield an investment return which would enable us to provide a higher standard of housing at lower rentals than would otherwise be possible. In bringing to this area 3,000 new families, it was appropriate for the Company to take advantage of the investment opportunities afforded by the need for commercial facilities in the community. With off-street parking for 1,000 cars, which will enable it to serve the rapidly developing surrounding residential area previously lacking adequate facilities, the main shopping center helps to bind Fresh Meadows and the surrounding neighborhood together as a community with loyalties and common interests. The opportunity is provided for the growth of a distinctive village atmosphere within New York City, where there tends to be such a lack of neighborhood ties.

From the owner's viewpoint, it

was imperative that Fresh Meadows be designed so that a high degree of efficiency could be attained by the management. And, once more, "efficiency" is thought of in terms of long-term operation. Some owners of rental housing are compelled or prefer to concentrate on obtaining the largest possible return on the investment in the shortest possible time. The life insurance company, however, must have a different viewpoint. Its primary aim is the sale and servicing of life insurance, consisting of contracts that may last a life-time of many decades. It must be deeply aware of the long-range public relations aspects of its activities. When a life insurance company undertakes a rental housing development, the investment is a poor one unless, in addition to a satisfactory return, it brings good will for the company—and this is not always easy in landlord-tenant relationships.



Looked at in this light, great importance attaches to those features of design and construction which help to achieve long-term operating economies, or which help to build greater good will among tenants, or, better still, which help

to do both. Such features may, perhaps, require a larger initial outlay but be less expensive in the long run. To illustrate by simple examples: it may be advisable to spend more at the outset for a central heating plant with central panelboard controls which enable one watch engineer to regulate the heat for the entire development. Or to spend more in first costs for oak block flooring, for especially good kitchens with additional kitchen cabinets and other added conveniences, and for bathrooms with tile floors and wainscot and superior quality fixtures and accessories. Or to utilize reinforced concrete fireproof construction, even for the two- and three-story buildings, with brick exteriors curtailing wood trim, which should reduce outside maintenance to the minimum while fully preserving the attractive appearance of the buildings. The architects have done many things at Fresh Meadows in the interest of both operating and public relations efficiency.



When constructing housing for three thousand families, we believe it is desirable to provide certain community opportunities in the hope that thereby roots will be

established so that the resident families will wish to live there a long time. In furtherance of this goal at Fresh Meadows, the New York Life deeded a six-acre plot to the City of New York for a new public school and a large adjoining playground. A nursery school for 130 children is being provided. Hobby rooms and club rooms will be available. The main shopping center includes such provisions for adult recreation and for family and group activities as a bowling alley, motion picture theater and a restaurant with banquet facilities. A public golf course is less than one-half mile distant. While the Company must refrain from what might be interpreted as an effort to regiment or regulate community life, it hopes that healthy community activities will flourish under the favorable conditions and facilities which are being provided.

To summarize: when an insurance company plans to construct and operate rental housing, it must look primarily to the long pull. It must provide housing and community facilities that represent progress in housing and community planning, and that will be good for many, many years to come. It must operate the project in a manner

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FRESH MEADOWS, QUEENS, L. I., N. Y.

Two 13-story apartments and 140 buildings of two and three stories will serve 3,000 families, with a land coverage of less than 15 percent

VOORHEES, WALKER, FOLEY & SMITH, ARCHITECTS

Photograph by Sigurd Fischer



FRESH MEADOWS, QUEENS, L. I., N. Y.

Every effort has been made to avoid an institutional and regimented look by varying heights, color of brick and size of units

VOORHEES, WALKER, FOLEY & SMITH, ARCHITECTS

Photograph by Sigurd Fischer

that will not only bring a satisfactory financial return but continuing good will as well. In spite of construction costs which have made these goals exceedingly difficult to attain, it is my belief that effective expression of these aims has been achieved at Fresh Meadows. For the initial concept, site selection and planning, mention should be made of the work of Mr. George S. Van Schaick, then Vice President in charge of the Company's Real Estate and Mortgage Loan Department; Mr. G. Har-

mon Gurney, now Chief Architect of the Housing Department, and his assistant Mr. J. Sanger Brown; Mr. Mendes Hershman; and Mrs. James Felt, our real estate advisor. To our architects, Mr. Perry Coke Smith, Mr. Taylor Gherardi, and many others of the firm of Voorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith, the Company is greatly indebted for their fine talent in interpreting, improving, and executing our concept of Fresh Meadows as a good life insurance company investment in rental housing.



Honors

GOLDWIN GOLDSMITH, F.A.I.A., has been named an Advisory Counselor of The Construction Specifications Institute—an organization aimed to bring about a better mutual understanding and respect between the general public and the professions, trades and industries associated in construction work.

WILLIAM W. WURSTER, Dean of M.I.T.'s Architectural Department, and **FREDERICK BIGGER,**

F.A.I.A., of Pittsburgh, have been appointed by President Truman as members of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission.



JOHN E. BURCHARD, Dean of Humanities at M.I.T., has been elected a trustee of the Boston Museum of Sciences. Dean Burchard is among the scientists and engineers recently presented with the Medal for Merits by General Hodges and Rear Admiral Keys.

Ed Kemper Retires

ON THE LAST DAY of this month the Executive Director of The Institute switches off that notoriously inadequate electric lamp upon his desk in the Madison Study of The Octagon, takes his hat and coat from the little west closet, backs his car out of the stable yard and sheds a heavy mantle of responsibility. That mantle is already being hefted by Edmund C. Purves.

For nearly thirty-five years The Institute has been Ed Kemper's life—and the life of The Institute has been Ed Kemper.

Thirty-five years is a long time in anybody's life. Back in 1913, The Institute had—if we include Honorary Members and Honorary Corresponding Members—a membership roll of 1159. There were then 37 chapters. On September 1 of that year the Treasurer reported a balance on hand of \$2,934.40, but warned that by the end of the year there would be a deficit of \$2,500.

Compare these figures with the present 7,800 Corporate Members plus 86 Honorary and Honorary Corresponding Members; 91 chapters; and a 1948 budget of over \$275,000, and it seems that Ed Kemper and The Institute have both grown up. Looking back over this evidence of growth and looking at the virile organization that he has nursed to its present power and potentialities, Ed Kemper feels that he can quit and go fishing. Will anyone deny that he has earned that privilege?



On June 20, 1948, at its Salt Lake City meeting, The Board of Directors reluctantly agreed to a retirement that had been, for several years, an impending shadow. A resolution of appreciation was phrased, has been engrossed and is now being signed by the Officers and Directors then in office. Its text follows:

To EDWARD CRAWFORD KEMPER
Honorary Member, The American Institute of Architects
Executive Secretary, 1913-1946
Executive Director, 1946-1948

DECEMBER, 1948

THE American Institute of Architects stands deeply in your debt.

For nearly thirty-five years, during which it has grown from a small group of twelve hundred architects to its present membership of over seventy-five hundred, you have ministered to its affairs with gifted understanding. Through two world conflicts and a major economic depression, your able management has helped immeasurably to maintain its strength and character under trying circumstances.

Each succeeding President, and each succeeding Board of Directors, has found in you a sympathetic aide, whose assistance has been invaluable and whose fund of pertinent knowledge, gleaned from years of observation and experience, has been inexhaustible. In a position beset by varied and unusual problems, your rare tact and discerning judgment have allayed fear and dissolved misapprehension.

You have watched carefully each expenditure of The Institute and your alert monitorship of its re-

sources has been in a large measure responsible for the sound financial position which The Institute enjoys today.

So intimate has been your connection during these years of growth, that your name is linked inseparably with the progress of The Institute.

As it now reluctantly accedes to your request for retirement, The Board of Directors of The American Institute of Architects conveys its deep appreciation of your years of devoted service and expresses the hope that you will always maintain a warm interest in Institute affairs, as your host of Institute friends will in yours.

These signatures are being appended: Douglas William Orr, Searle H. von Storch, Clair W. Ditchy, Charles F. Cellarius, Arthur Ward Archer, Kenneth C. Black, Branson V. Gamber, Paul Gerhardt, Jr., Earl T. Heitschmidt, William G. Kaelber, Richard Koch, Joseph D. Leland, Allan H. Neal, John L. Skinner and George C. Young.

From the living Presidents in whose terms of office Mr. Kemper served come the following tributes:

IN 1914 it had become clear that The Institute was too large and its business too complicated to be run by one of its members. Glenn Brown had been for years a de-

voted servant to The Institute and it was hard to part with him. It was decided that The Institute needed a professional executive secretary whose whole time would be devoted to The Institute.

I think no one better than I can testify to the enormous good fortune we had in finding Ed

Kemper. It was not only that he had the right sort of training for the work, but he was, heart and soul, so interested in it, that, in the early years, he refused many offers of a higher salary to stay in his post. It is largely due to him that The Institute has grown and prospered and every member of The Institute owes him a debt which can never be repaid. As he now retires, we may well give him our warmest wishes for his health and prosperity and say: "Farewell, good and faithful servant."

R. CLIPSTON STURGIS, F.A.I.A.,
President, 1913-1915



I AM HAPPY to have the opportunity to express what I know is not alone my feeling, but that of every officer and member of the Institute Boards with whom I served under Presidents Waid and Medary and during my term of office as President, the years 1928-30.

Upon his retirement on December 31, Edward C. Kemper will have devoted 34 years of his life to The American Institute of Architects. He leaves with the good wishes of all and the sincere hope that the years ahead may be full to overflowing with happiness and prosperity.

What these years of faithful service have meant to The Institute and the profession can never be measured, but one who has been

privileged to occupy the office of President knows full well the immense capacity for arduous work of this quiet, thoughtful, efficient man, and of his notable contribution to the welfare and progress of The Institute.

It is my desire that this be recorded as a tribute of affection to the man who throughout these many years has performed a difficult job with distinction and devotion to the aims, ideals and traditions of The American Institute of Architects.

C. HERRICK HAMMOND, F.A.I.A.,
President, 1928-1930



FROM 1930 to 1932 I went through the motions of being President of The Institute but I would have given a much sadder performance of the part (probably deserving ripe tomatoes) if it had not been for the almost continuous, kindly and wise coaching of "Eddie" Kemper. At the time I hardly realized how excellently he conducted me, as he modestly hid behind the scenes; "keeping out of the politics of the organization," as he called it!

It would be hard for me to list even a small part of what The Institute owes to Edward C. Kemper. The kind of disinterested loyalty which he displayed at his post in Washington was surely unique in that city of organized "interests." We can only hope that it has had its beneficent influence as well on

groups other than The American Institute of Architects.

ROBERT D. KOHN, F.A.I.A.,
President, 1930-1932

My dear Ed:

For the last thirty-four years you have been such an integral part of The Institute that I cannot look upon your retirement with any degree of complaisance. I know your right to retire has been more than thoroughly earned.

You have been so completely imbued with the spirit of the founders of The Institute that you encouraged members to carry on in their desires to maintain the highest standards of professional practice.

During my term of office, I leaned very heavily upon you at times, and you were always extremely helpful. I believe the many presidents, whom you served under, would be entirely in accord with this statement. The friendship that developed through our association is one of my pleasantest memories. You have my highest regards and best wishes.

I believe that the following quotation from William Makepeace Thackeray states your case succinctly:

"To endure is greater than to dare; to tire out hostile fortune; to be daunted by no difficulty; to keep heart when all have lost it; to go through intrigue spotless; to forego even ambition

when the end is gained—who can say this is not greatness?"

ERNEST JOHN RUSSELL, F.A.I.A.,
President, 1932-1935



Dear Ed:

Welcome to the exclusive company of Emeriti—the left-overs of hard work. As one of them, I can assure you that it is a most agreeable company and that the status is delightful. You can express your opinions without raising the question, "I wonder what he is after." You see it is too late to be after anything.

It does seem strange to me, however, that you have arrived at this age. My memory goes back to the times when I was on the Board and later the President. You seemed like a youngster then and behaved like one. I remember a gala night at Williamsburg when we were arranging for the 1936 Convention. We did have a good time together, not only in the difficult arrangements for opening the Chamberlin Hotel but in overcoming the objections of the doubters, particularly as to the bar. Remember the mint juleps?

Well, you have met a lot of such conditions during your career and I know in the years to come you will look back upon them with real satisfaction, having come out on top.

Thirty-four years is a long time to work for one boss. I can testify that your service has never varied

from its high quality. You made my career as an officer easy and pleasant.

I am looking forward to the time when you and I can put our white heads together and sum up all the things that happened during the trying times of the 1930s, beginning with the NRA and into the early years of the War.

May the leisure that comes to you be the happiest time of your life!

STEPHEN F. VOORHEES, F.A.I.A.,
President, 1935-1937



THE LOSS of Kemper to The Institute is a matter for tears. We had been reconciled to the idea that at some remote and most unwelcome hour Nature would disturb this happy relationship, since men rarely live as long as institutions. I have made many a wild and anguished estimate meantime of the actual measure of Kemper's dispensability, and some sense of it came finally to me in the dismay of the British profession at the retirement of Sir Ian McAlister, whose accomplishment was in kind. To me Kemper's service had always a hint of dedication, for it was obvious that to the industry of the beaver he united capabilities of a character that could at any time have found a more profitable market. These he bore with so engaging a modesty that at the counsels of the Board I was always entertained by the innocence with which

he concealed his sophistication in the presence of our ineptitudes. But it was the atmosphere of Conventions that brought out the genius in him. The ease with which he composed the technical and diplomatic complications that are never separable from these proceedings must ever remain a mystery to me.

At such a moment as this it is difficult not to fall into the mood of obituary, yet Kemper is still a youth in my perspective, and many days, I hope, still lie ahead of him which will be all the happier for the thought that he gave the best of his life to the architects of America and they were grateful.

CHARLES D. MAGINNIS, F.A.I.A.,
President, 1937-1939



AS A MEMBER of The Institute for more than twenty years, my first impressions of Kemper's efficiency and unselfish devotion to The Institute have been enhanced through the years. In my serving The Institute as a Committee member, Director, Treasurer, and President, with the resulting more intimate and thorough understanding of the man, these first impressions have been confirmed and I have come to know Ed Kemper as a person who has devoted his every effort to the architectural profession over the entire country. Our debt for such service can never be paid in money nor his contribution to the professional life

DECEMBER, 1948

of every practising architect in the country fully realized. In his retirement he will find great satisfaction and joy in knowing that he performed so well.

RAYMOND J. ASHTON, F.A.I.A.,
President, 1943-1945



To E. C. K. from J. R. E., Jr.—
“as of interest”:

Those who have had to do with Institute affairs at the Octagon know full well what contribution our retiring Executive Director (Ed to us) has made to our A.I.A. in the thirty-four years he has devoted to it without stint. So do most of our membership. Any tribute paid him must fall short of his due.

His wise counsel and gentle steering of those charged with responsibility have been no small factor in persuading us to take office. Without his steady hand we who have served with him would have done so in fear and trembling. With Ed to rely on we have sometimes exhibited an assurance and confidence in our actions which has likely given a false and exaggerated picture of our real capacity. I know this to be true in my case.

Needless to say, we hold for Ed a deep and abiding affection. We shall cherish fond and nostalgic memories of the hours spent in labor (and otherwise) with him. In the line of duty it has always amazed me what could be ac-

complished with Ed's ubiquitous help. And even with things at their worst, his sense of humor was an ever-present Godsend.

The Institute will not lose this staunch and constant support which it has enjoyed for so many years. E.C.K. will be ever with us in spirit. In the years to come I can well imagine Ed's successor in office will be heartened to hear, in times of stress, a faint but clear echo from the very walls of The Octagon of his cheery chuckle—“Never a dull moment.”

JAMES R. EDMUNDS, JR., F.A.I.A.,
President, 1945-1947



From the living Secretaries in whose terms of office Mr. Kemper served:

I HAVE just learned that Ed Kemper is really going to retire on December 31st. Like the first blizzard of winter, that has been one of those things that we know is going to happen but that we just refuse to think about seriously until it does. It is, I believe, thirty-four years since he took over at The Octagon. It is about thirty-two years since I first came actively in touch with him when I became Secretary, and for six years we were intimately connected with Institute affairs.

There could be no better way to become thoroughly acquainted with a personality, and I was constantly aware, during those years,

of what I think lies at the root of Ed's success in his job, and that is his basic loyalty to The Institute and to the function of an Executive Secretary. He was always ready to express his own opinion on any matter that arose, but he never tried to impose his own idea, and was always ready to carry out, without any reservations, whatever decision was arrived at by the responsible elected officers of The Institute.

His sound judgment carried conviction and his poise and sense of humor facilitated the discussions of policy and the working out of administrative details, so that the hours I spent in that opposite chair at his desk were always fruitful and enjoyable, and color the memories of my most intensive Institute activity. So I have a sense of gratitude to him for those years of intimate cooperation as well as admiration for his ability and the integrity of his service to the profession.

He has stimulated affection as well as gratitude in the hearts of many Institute members, who wish him many happy years to come in what we sincerely hope will be a not too complete retirement.

WM. STANLEY PARKER, F.A.I.A.,
Secretary, 1916-1923



AMONG the many pleasant recollections of my period of service as Secretary of The Institute,

none is more precious than those which spring from association with Ed Kemper.

Often have I marveled at his tact in steering officers and directors into safe channels when perilous actions seemed imminent. Often have I unblushingly accepted credit for work of the Secretary so ably done by Executive Director Kemper.

Officers come and officers go, but Kemper seems so integral a part of The Institute that we shall not easily accustom ourselves to his absence.

Fortunate are we who had the privilege of serving with him and knowing the fascination of his cheerful personality. He will live long in our memories.

CHARLES T. INGHAM, F.A.I.A.,
Secretary, 1934-1943



ED KEMPER is a rare combination of tact, efficiency and energy. Without his knowledge of Institute affairs in all of its ramifications, his unfailing memory, untiring enthusiasm and sound judgment, the job of Secretary of The Institute would have been impossible for anyone but a superman.

He never put himself forward but always was there with counsel and advice, guiding the officers where he felt it needed, or drawing them out when fuller discussion and thought on a problem seemed necessary.

How he has survived thirty-four years of changing administrations

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"Just a moment, Mrs. Day, while we see
what we can do for this visitor."

EDWARD CRAWFORD KEMPER, HON. A. I. A.

Executive Secretary, 1913-1946
Executive Director, 1946-1948

Photograph by J. W. Rankin

*Journal
The AIA*



ENTRANCE DETAIL OF A HOUSE IN WESTON, MASS.
OFFICE OF ELEANOR RAYMOND, ARCHITECT

Photograph by Haskell

In the series of
architects' favorite details

*Journal
The AIA*

without losing his temper or growing old is one of the marvels of his make-up.

Knowing and working with him has been a great privilege and one of the memories of association with The Institute that will live longest.

ALEX. C. ROBINSON, III, F.A.I.A.,
Secretary, 1943-1947



From the present Officers of The Institute:

I AM SURE that each and every president having experienced the rewards of association with him during their terms of office would concur that in E.C.K. they found, as have I, an able counsellor, invaluable helper and sympathetic friend. His skill in drawing on his card-index brain and photographic mind for background information covering the functioning of The Institute during the past thirty-four years, coupled with his ever-cheerful mien and enthusiastic willingness to furnish generous assistance, have made the duties of the office immeasurably lighter for me than would have been the case without benefit of his tactful guidance and consummate abilities.

DOUGLAS WILLIAM ORR, F.A.I.A.,
President



WHAT'S THIS about Ed Kemper retiring after only 34 years? He can't do that; he can't

quit The Institute; he is The Institute, and The Octagon, and Washington, to us. Didn't he build all three? Well, at least he carried a tremendous part of the load; and the carrying has always been done quietly and humbly—but surely! His modest mastery of protocol and procedure, his tireless devotion to expedition of unending detail, his patience, his sincerity, and his industry have meant much to the profession.

Every architect in America should know Ed Kemper, for every single one is indebted to him, and such an accomplishment is tiring; he well deserves time off.

Our best wishes will be with him, always.

GLENN STANTON, F.A.I.A.,
Vice President



AT THE 1926 Convention of The Institute I met Edward C. Kemper for the first time. During the intervening years, through various chapter and Institute assignments, the meetings and the correspondence with him have had a delightful and stimulating continuity until now, when the association has become most intimate (and the correspondence incessant), my appreciation of his rare talents has reached its zenith.

Edward C. Kemper has developed a high tradition for the performance of affairs in The Institute. Policies, no doubt, will be modified, abandoned or replaced, but the courteous and comprehend-

ing "modus operandi" which he has established will, I hope, always remain. Born of his many full years of experience, he has evolved a gracious and tactful liaison between The Octagon and The Institute's far-flung membership, which is informative, sensitive to the individual's conceptions or misconceptions, and always clear and satisfying in its explanations and solutions to troublesome problems.

Honor him well!

CLAIR W. DITCHY, F.A.I.A.,
Secretary



FOR more than thirty years E. C. Kemper has given to the members of the architectural profession an understanding and a friendship that will never be forgotten. To The American Institute of Architects he has given a lifetime of service that has been most valuable in many ways.

It's a poll, but it isn't an attempt to establish, once and for all, the five most inspiring buildings in the world

What Buildings Give You a Thrill?

By Edwin Bateman Morris

A WHILE AGO I sent out through the facilities of the Tile Manufacturers Association, for which I am architectural advisor, a questionnaire to some 500 architects of my acquaintance. The general purpose of this was to find out

The Treasurer is particularly aware of his great contribution to the financial position of The Institute. Probably to Kemper, more than to anyone else, we owe our reserve funds and our present sound position today.

For many years he has so guided the budgets and the expenditures of The Institute that at the end of each year there has been a balance put into the reserves. He has ever considered the funds of The Institute a sacred trust, to be economically and carefully expended and guarded.

May his aims ever continue to guide the treasurers and the administration of The A.I.A. and may he, in his well-earned retirement, take satisfaction in the sound position that he has achieved for The Institute that he loves.

CHARLES F. CELLARIUS, F.A.I.A.,
Treasurer

what the profession, having arrived in a manner of speaking at a serene point in present-day design, thought of its results and of its possible relation to yardstick architecture of the past.

To quote from the question-

naire: "Views upon the subject of architectural beauty vary, yet there are fundamental things which neither time nor current opinion seem wholly to change. Buildings come into being which, whatever their spirit and style, possess an ageless, timeless quality of perfect architectural diction; which may therefore be said to be Architecture. Would you list below five buildings which, to your eye and heart, come as nearly as may be in the above category."

There were naturally not a few objections to the form and objective of the poll, but generally architects responded, and to them I extend my thanks. The results I now offer, with the warning that the effort was not to find the best building nor to award any blue ribbons; but to discover direction of thinking. If there is interest in the result, each person will doubtless find a different interest; and if results are ascribed they will be different.

The architects to whom the questionnaire was sent are in general Institute members, and are from Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Michi-

gan, Illinois, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Utah and California. Below are two lists, a weighted and an unweighted one, each containing the first twenty-five buildings in the order of the voting.

LIST by weighted votes—5 points for 1st choice, 4 for 2nd, etc.

- *Folger Library
- *Lincoln Memorial
- *Rockefeller Center
- *Nebraska State Capitol
- *Federal Reserve (D. C.)
- *Parthenon
- *Philadelphia Savings Fund Soc.
- *National Gallery of Art (D. C.)
- *Cranbrook
- *Chartres
- *St. Thomas Church, (N. Y. C.)
- *Academy of Sciences (D. C.)
- *Empire State Bldg.
- *Pan American Building
- *Federal Loan Agency (D. C.)
- *U. S. Capitol
- *Bear Run House (F. L. Wright)
- *Archives Building
St. Peter's, Rome
- *University of Virginia
- *Notre Dame, Paris
- *Mont San Michel
Taj Mahal
- *St. John the Divine
- *Stockholm City Hall

LIST by number of times mentioned regardless of order of choice.

- *Lincoln Memorial
- *Folger Library
- *Rockefeller Center
- *Nebraska State Capitol
- *Federal Reserve (D. C.)
- *Parthenon
- *Cranbrook
- *National Gallery of Art (D. C.)
- *Philadelphia Savings Fund Soc.
- *Academy of Sciences (D. C.)
- *U. S. Capitol
- *St. Thomas Church, (N. Y. C.)
- *Chartres
- *Federal Loan Agency (D. C.)
- *Empire State Bldg.
- *Notre Dame, Paris
- *Bear Run House (F. L. Wright)
- *St. John the Divine
- *Pan American Building
- Cathedral of Learning (Pittsburgh)
- *University of Virginia
- *Stockholm City Hall
- Bethesda Naval Hospital
- *Mont San Michel
- *Archives Building

*Indicate buildings appearing on both lists.

It is interesting to note that in 26th place on both lists was the Wisconsin "Taliesin."

NOTES ON THE POLL

Together with Dr. Gallup, I find I have some difficulty in appraising the results of a poll. I feel that this poll is paramountly important as expressing current thinking reading to a result rather than as expressing the result.

An interesting result came from the fact that the questionnaire carried no restriction—perhaps it should have—as to period and geographical location. The majority of the answerers felt that it was necessary or permissible to go far back and far afield, indicating that our strong tie-back to the past has not been broken.

This, of course, does not in any way repudiate nor argue against Modern design. The vote is strongly in favor of Modern. The non-Modern examples are the high points of architectural achievement through the ages. The Parthenon, St. Peter's, Chartres, Notre Dame, Mont San Michel, the Taj Mahal, represent buildings which in their time and perhaps even today are for their present purposes functional, and are endowed with a complete simplicity of structural and architectural intent. It could therefore be said that, in relation to their times, they were of a

modern rather than a traditional spirit. A finely drawn point; but the high points of architectural achievement are not too greatly subject to classification. They are great architectural achievements. Period.

I also feel that the design of churches is not wholly by architectural choice as to style, but by uplifting concept of Faith and the Life Everlasting expressed by forms which have come to carry reverence for an unseen and never fully understood Power.

Thus one finds that three-quarters of the remaining buildings on the list are Modern, of an aspect that follows the strong principles of the style, in the spirit of functionalism and simplicity. They perhaps tend to emphasize the fact that affectation and mere sophistication, acting against the current of good taste, have not been voted into the list as good Modern.

A thing that I liked, and I think it is to the credit of the profession, was the complete absence of ironic bitterness toward the past, simply because it was the past; a gracious gesture. Selecting at random, Gordon Kaufmann, for instance, brackets in his vote: the Lincoln Memorial, Museum of Modern Art, Governor's Palace at Wil-

liamsburg and Rockefeller Center. In the same spirit Leopold Hauf mentions together Lincoln Memorial and the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society building.

It is interesting to note the results of a previous poll of this nature. The poll by the *Federal Architect* in the early 'thirties listed the Empire State Building as first, the Lincoln Memorial as second, Nebraska State Capitol as third.

With those to whom I have talked and who have written me, there is often a conviction that Rockefeller Center is a zenith of architectural accomplishment nobly representing our time and also being a piece of architecture that would be impressive and outstanding in any age and style. It may well turn out to be one of those great and timeless achievements I spoke of above; not a greater accomplishment than the Folger but a great accomplishment widely seen.

I am somewhat surprised that so few picked the Oregon State Capitol, a beautiful example of the style, functional, simple, having dignity and authority. That may possibly be because so few architects have actually seen the building. That point unquestionably in-

fluenced the voting in many cases, architects preferring to vote for things they had seen; and of course this was controlled by the nature of their various travel courses.

John Almand amused and pleased me by his remark that "nothing is so satisfying as a real good job of Tudor Gothic." I am just an indefensible romanticist and I know what he means. There is a remembrance of college days, sunlight through leaded glass, open fire shining on little Gothic whimsies, oak panelling, carved wood. But the age has changed. That was too, too romantic. We can't have that "no more," John.

Victor Matteson says that architects are "opportunists, ignoring the esthetic." I think in a sense that may be true. If so, it has been necessary. They have followed, conscientiously and with almost Puritanical urge, reasoning and logic. Perhaps there is too much reasoning and not enough esthetics in present architecture, and I have often said so, but I am now of the belief that the esthetics will come back in stronger form after the present problems have been licked and consolidated. At any rate it is true that reasoning and logic have made the profession virile and

alive; whereas it might have kept strictly to esthetics and have been left far behind in the progress and accomplishment of this era.

In this vein, Frank E. Wehrle writes, "I must admit I could not rate anything of today properly referred to the past great works." And Lorimer Rich sends a copy of a well-written article of his, in which he states, among other things, that the architecture of the present is necessary because we have neither the funds nor the artisans to do architecture as of the past. This is true, and is certainly part of the present soft-peddalling of esthetics; but as time wears on, it is certain and without doubt that some of the feel of the past will bring back, more and more, touches of decorative appeal to reinforce and assist the present pure glamour of logic.

The questionnaire had a line, on which it suggested that the answerer might list one of his own buildings—in the interests of sincerity. H. C. Baskerville, happening to write Chartres in that space, felt it necessary to append the footnote, "I was not the architect of Chartres." Tom Locraft left the line blank, explaining that his "best building is still to be achieved."

The voting was apparently not easy for anyone. Fred Bigger, one of our most reasoning architects, said in his elegant and cultured way, "I protest the impossibility of staying put, durn you." William J. Smith, in the same high-church spirit, observes, "For the love of Mike, Eddie! Tomorrow I'll make another list!"

The gifted Francis Sullivan says in his pleasant way, "I pick the Nebraska State Capitol—less tower," showing a very keenly acrobatic and perceiving mind, as one who would say "I pick Rita Hayworth—less one eye." None but the most imaginative and penetrating intellect—like Frank's—could do that.

The poll does have one important slant. The fear has existed that the architects of the present era were building up an entirely new profession which was purposefully meant to have no connection with nor interest in the profession as of the past, except for the use of the title. Not too long ago an architect did not look back, lest he figuratively turn into a pillar of salt—and what is worse than a pillar, save a pilaster or a cartouche? They faced forward, disdaining the scene behind them. But now, the men who like Modern admit an affection for the Parthenon. It seems, reassuringly, to prove architecture did not die a while ago, and this is still it.



Architects Read and Write

Letters from readers—discussion, argumentative, corrective, even vituperative.



ENTERTAINING

BY BOLTON WHITE, San Francisco

A GREAT DEAL is expected of an architect, but the following letter gave me something to think about!

"Dear Mr. B. White:

In regards to your completed plans for Mr. John Murray Jr.'s residence in San Mateo, Califor-

nia, and that bids are in order. We would like to be entertained. Please forward blueprints and specifications to us. Thanking you in advance, I remain, Truly yours,

General Contractors"

Enough said.

PHILADELPHIA LOOKS NEW YORK OVER

BY BERYL PRICE, Philadelphia

ON Saturday, October 16, 1948, the Philadelphia Chapter, A.I.A., did a rather unusual thing. It sent 45 of its members on a trip to New York to see and analyze the public works projects that have taken place in that city and which are proposed. During the course of the trip, we were guests of the New York Chapter at lunch and enjoyed the splendid hospitality of Harold Sleeper, their president.

Under the excellent guidance of Bob Moses' Park Commission, we visited and inspected the Battery Tunnel, the East River Asphalt Plant and all of the new housing projects on the lower East Side. Also participating in the trip as the guest of the Philadelphia Chapter were members of the Department of Public Works, the City

Planning Commission and members of the Society of Professional Engineers.

Outstanding during the trip was the private observation car supplied by the Reading Railroad and the howling siren of a motorcycle cop who led the cavalcade from the Battery to northern Manhattan all the way up Broadway. Another outstanding feature of the trip was the inspection of the future plans for United Nations and an interesting tour of the drafting-rooms of that organization.

It is planned in the future to make many further field trips, the culmination of which will be one made to Washington, D. C. with an inspection of all the proposed projects that will take place in the nation's capital.

THE UNITED NATIONS' HEADQUARTERS

By J. J. P. OUD, Rotterdam, Holland

A letter from an eminent architect of Holland, who is an Honorary Corresponding Member of the R.I.B.A., written to the Editor of the *Journal of the R.I.B.A.* and published in the October 1948 issue.

THE REACTIONS of Mr. Robertson and Mr. Passmore to my letter on the U. N. Building compel me to clear up my argument in some way. I am thankful to both correspondents for their sympathy, but they have somewhat misjudged the essence of my words and my convictions.

The essence of my argument was that New Architecture is capable of more than the jejune U. N. office building which is to be erected in New York; also that it can produce a building of greater dignity and nobler character within its own limits. It is wrong to suppose that this argument of

mine has anything to do with the need for eclecticism that Mr. Passmore has discovered to be necessary among the public. A need like this, if it really exists, is due to the fact that functional building in its higher aspects is of too little interest to hold the attention of the public. This objection could be avoided by criticizing functional building on these grounds, and by trying to stimulate modern architects to some idealism above the mere matter-of-fact work which functional building tends to promote. This is what I am trying to do—not by recommending eclecticism—but by asking that the possibilities of new architectural expression should be sought.

I did not write—as seems to be suggested—because my own work has been misunderstood, but merely on behalf of the development of New Architecture. Pioneering thirty years ago in functional building, I met misunderstanding; today, fighting to help functional building to rise to art-in-building, I shall meet misunderstanding anew; this is clear but is of no importance. The importance is only that functional building at the moment is in a phase of self-sufficiency which is the best state to lead it quickly and totally to an end, and, as a matter of fact, by eclecticism if we are not attentive!

We ought to be aware of the fact that functional building is the basis of New Architecture, but that it is not yet New Architecture

itself. It is not yet art-in-building. New Architecture is more than the solution of present practical needs with contemporary building machinery. It is above all the result of idealism in the mind of the architect. It is the outcome of his force of aesthetic expression. We want a lot more idealism than functional building general offers today. Aesthetic expression is the language of architecture. Without this expression a building is "deaf-mute." The U. N. Building planned for New York is nearly "deaf-mute." The effort Mr. Harrison makes to work out the scheme of the Committee is useless. A building is an organism as a whole, not an indifferent core slightly reformed to give it an acceptable shape. Its growth should not be allowed to resemble the process of dressing a woman who is going to be made beautiful by changing and disguising her figure. This leads to fashion, not to style. For the U. N. Building, we must claim style!

The organism of a building like that for the U. N. has to be a creation from the very first beginning, based on and in continual interaction with the essential conditions. It will never become a creation by remodelling a preconceived neutral scheme. It is a mistake to think that the impersonal effect of teamwork like this can be at the same time the expression of a universal spiritual idea. By no means! A spiritual idea in archi-

tecture is never unintentional. Lacking such an idea, a work of building activity may be a clever piece of engineering science but it will fail to move us. As there is no emotion in it, it lacks perceptible well-being. It is not architecture!

And the site? Yes, the site chosen for the U. S. Building is a very bad one. It should have been rejected for a building of so high a standard! The aim of a building for the U. N. is not to cure the town planning of New York but to lift up the world!

"THE BOSS"

BY ARTHUR A. SHURCLIFF, Boston

IF YOU THINK the following comment will be of interest to your readers I shall be glad to have you print it. Doubtless you recall I am an Honorary Member of The American Institute of Architects, and past President of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

The October editorial letter of Mr. R. Clipston Sturgis regarding the part which a landscape architect should play in relation to a country house site, its outlook, orientation, approaches, planting, and gardens closes with these words:—"In brief, the architect,

if worthy of the name, must be the boss." During the past fifty years of my professional practice of landscape architecture I have been called in by a great many architects to consult in the design of country places and I must say I do not recall a "boss" among those men, yet they were considered worthy in their profession. Quite the contrary, they were distinguished by their happy ability to cooperate with other workers in the arts allied to architecture. I hope you will know that I am a very good friend of R. Clipston Sturgis and an admirer of his unusual ability and taste.

DO ARCHITECTS READ AND WRITE?

BY GOLDWIN GOLDSMITH, F.A.I.A., Austin, Texas

SO YOU BELIEVE that Architects Read and Write?

If I had the energy I would check the files of the JOURNAL and see how many of our 7800 members have written!

We have never been able to persuade any of our chapter, with the exception of four faculty members, to "put pen to paper" or "hit the keys." Let's hope they do read!

DECEMBER, 1948

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The Editor's Asides



THE ARCHITECT'S BEST FOOT is in process of being put forward. Small booklets setting forth the architect's function and implying his indispensability are making their debuts. The New York Chapter's effort is a 12-page 4" x 5½" booklet bearing on its buff cover the words, "You Need an Architect." Twelve pages also is the size hit upon by the Florida South Chapter for distribution by The Florida Association of Architects of its "Presenting Your Architect." It is 5" x 7", and, like the New York effort, is embellished with cartoon sketches with an emphasis on humor. Of more sober mien was a small and thicker booklet, "This Man the Architect," issued by *Architecture* back in 1930. It is difficult to measure the effectiveness of these little pamphlets. Dr. Gallup has not attempted it with a poll, which is perhaps just as well—but they seem a logical effort in the field of public relations.



OCULUS WONDERS why Don Graf no longer publishes his annual table of automobile sizes. It

seems that some post-war cars are longer than their predecessors, and obviously wider in body. Are we making garages too small?



ACCORDING to a Twentieth Century Fund report, nearly 12 million persons in the U.S.A. engage in fishing as a form of outdoor recreation. Could they have overlooked Ed Kemper?



J. P. H. PERRY, of Turner Construction Company, with access to dependable records, points out that building costs today are about 2¼ times what they were in 1939-40. If you want to go back still further, they are 3-1/7 times what they were at the depression dip of 1932. Or if you want comparison with 1913, costs are now 4½ times what they were then. One of the chief factors undoubtedly is the backlog of construction demand—the *Engineering News-Record* puts it at about six years of construction, at the present rate of activity. That backlog, built up by 15 years of inactivity through depression and war activities, is hard to cut

away, particularly when we hear that this year nearly two million more births are recorded than just before the war. And people are living longer when they get here: in 1940 there were nine million persons in this country of age 65 or over—now there are eleven million in that category. In view of such facts Mr. Perry's judgment is that "building costs are not likely to come down in the immediate future, or to come down by more than 10% at any time within the next five years, subject, of course, to a war or a great depression. Beyond five years we don't even attempt to dream."



I MUST CONFESS to being somewhat let down by the results of Eddie Morris' poll. The question asked was, in effect, "What five achievements of architecture give you the greatest thrill?" It is a broad question, without bounds of time or country. There is all the world's store of architectural treasure from which to choose. It seems to me that, faced with such a responsibility, I would reflect on the biggest architectural fact in history—that peoples have struggled, through centuries sometimes, to develop for themselves and their time an architectural

voice. Slow growth, a brief pinnacle of achievement, and a rapid decadence are characteristic of practically all. In long perspective we can see and at least partly understand and appreciate these great ground swells—the Egyptian temples to the dead, the Greek temples to their gods, the Roman grasp of great scale in building for national glorification and public works, the Byzantine grasp of the possibilities in the pendentive, the cathedral builders of medieval France—to name but five instances of the climb of men's minds to new heights. These achievements are certainly not things that we should copy; we must build for our own needs and with our own means. If, however, one does not get a thrill from the monuments that record for posterity the outstanding achievements in these great surges of the human spirit, he must be unresponsive indeed. Rockefeller Center may possibly be the architectural monument by which this people will be remembered, but we see it from a station point too close to permit of a fair perspective. It does give me a thrill, but not like that aroused by Karnak, the Parthenon, the Colosseum or the Pont du Gard, Sancta Sophia, or Amiens.

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The, 1
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136, 1
Architecte
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Atkins
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Bendin
The
Bennet
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Books
"Boss,
280
Brill,
toria

INDEX

VOLUME X: JULY-DECEMBER, 1948

References to illustrations are printed in italics

A.I.A. Gold Medal: 19, 75
Architect as a Force for Civic Progress, The, by Harold S. Buttenheim: 147
Architect Takes to the Air, The, by Andrew Francis Euston: 197
Architects' Civic Design Group of Metropolitan Detroit, The, by Suren Pilafian: 160
Architects Read and Write: 40, 88, 136, 185, 277
Architects Read and Write?, Do, by Goldwin Goldsmith, F.A.I.A.: 280
Architecture and Other Forms of Artistic Expression, by Irwin Edman: 154
Architecture and Planning?, Can We Separate, by Ernest Joseph Kump: 99
Architecture Broadens Its Base, by William W. Wurster: 30
"Architecture?, Is It," by John V. Campisi: 42
Architecture—Thoughts for a Layman, by John V. Van Pelt, F.A.I.A.: 39
Arnal, Leon Eugene, F.A.I.A.: 21, 24
Arnaud, Leopold: History and Architecture: 149
Art of Landscape Architecture, The, by Christopher Tunnard: 214
Ashton, Raymond J., F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 266
Atkinson, Rev. C. Harry: Students and Church Design: 9
Awards, Scholastic: 80
Awards, Steel Bridges: 235

Belluschi, Pietro, F.A.I.A.: 21, 24
Bendiner, Alfred: The White House Theme: 88
Bennett, Wells I., F.A.I.A.: Design Today: 61
Books & Bulletins: 42, 90, 186
"Boss, The," by Arthur A. Shurcliff: 280
Brill, C. B. F.: The Burchard Editorial: 137

Buildings Give You a Thrill?, What, by Edwin Bateman Morris: 272
Bulfinch, Francis Vaughan, F.A.I.A.: 21, 24
Burchard Editorial, The, by C. B. F. Brill: 137; by Charles Dana Loomis: 137
Burchard, John Ely: Guest Editorial: 51; "Mechanization Takes Command": 89
Buttenheim, Harold S.: The Architect as a Force for Civic Progress: 147

Calendar: 18, 79, 129, 179, 227, 253
California Architects Meet in the Yosemitic: 236
Campisi, John V.: "Is It Architecture?": 42
Cellarius, Charles F., F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 272
Centurian Architects, Memoirs of, by William Adams Delano, F.A.I.A.: 3, 81, 130, 180
Church Design, by R. Clipston Sturgis, F.A.I.A.: 140
Church Design, Students and, by Rev. C. Harry Atkinson: 9
Church Museum?, Must America Be a, by Charles E. Thomas: 186
Churchill, Henry S., Guest Editorial by: 243
Clark, Cameron, F.A.I.A.: 22, 24
Clark, Gilmore, landscape architect: Proposed Development of The Octagon Garden as The Institute's War Memorial: 67, 68
Colbert, Charles R.: An Experiment in Public Education: 208
Collaborative Competition: 228
Competition, A New York State: 129; The Ethiopia: 178; Collaborative: 228
Convention, President Orr's Opening of the: 102
Convention, Seminar Highlights of the: 53

Convention Special, On the, by Edwin Bateman Morris: 112
 Convention Special to Houston and the Post-Convention Tour to Mexico City: 244
 Cowgill, Clinton H.: Registration Law Enforcement at the Local Level: 167
 Cret, Paul Philippe, In Memory of, by C. C. Zantzinger, F.A.I.A.: 109
 Cummings, George Bain, F.A.I.A.: 22, 24
 Dailey, Gardner A., architect: *Outdoor Dining-room, Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Honolulu*: 125
 Dailey, Gardner Acton, F.A.I.A.: 22, 24
 Delano, William Adams, F.A.I.A.: Memoirs of Centurian Architects: 3, 81, 130, 180
 Design Today, by Wells I. Bennett, F.A.I.A.: 61
 Detroit, The Architects' Civic Design Group of Metropolitan, by Suren Pilafian: 160
 Diruta Teutonica Furore, by Ian C. MacCallum: 170, 202
 Ditchy, Clair W., F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 271
 Editor's Asides, The: 44, 93, 141, 188, 237, 281
 Edman, Irwin: Architecture and Other Forms of Artistic Expression: 154
 Edmunds, James R., Jr., F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 267
 Educational Field, News of the: 76, 128, 178, 228, 250
 Education, An Experiment in Public, by Charles R. Colbert: 208
 Entertaining, by Bolton White: 277
Entrance Detail; Office of Eleanor Raymond, architect: 270
 Ethiopia Competition, The: 178
 Euston, Andrew Francis: The Architect Takes to the Air: 197
 Federal Courts Building, Washington, D. C., Proposed, Louis Justement, architect: 77, 78
 Fee, The Professional, by R. Clipston Sturgis, F.A.I.A.: 14
 Fees: Time for a Change, by C. Godfrey Poggi: 251
 Fellowship in 1948, Advanced to: 21
 Fine Arts Medal, The: 20
 Fir, A Technical Note on, by Vitruvius: 13
 Fisher, Howard T.: Prefabrication: 219
Fisher, Howard T.: System of Spandrel Wall Construction for U. S. Department of Commerce: 221, 222
 Forum's Reporting of the Convention, by Edgar I. Williams, F.A.I.A.: 136
 Fresh Meadows, an equity investment by a life insurance company, by Otto L. Nelson: 254
 Garnsey, Julian Ellsworth: Light, Color and the Human Machine: 105
 Gerhardt, Paul, Jr., F.A.I.A.: 22, 24
 Gold Medal of The A.I.A.: 19, 75
 Gold Medal, Charles Donagh Maginnis Accepts The Institute's: 75
 Goldsmith, Goldwin, F.A.I.A.: Do Architects Read and Write?: 280
 Guest Editorial, by John Ely Burchard: 51; by Ernest Joseph Kump: 99; by Harold S. Buttenheim: 147; by Jerryold Loeb: 195; by Henry S. Churchill: 243
 Hammond, C. Herrick, F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 264
 Hays, James Byers, F.A.I.A.: 27, 25
 History and Architecture, by Leopold Arnaud: 149
 Holden, Arthur C.: A review of "Planning the Neighborhood": 229
 Honors: 29, 74, 178, 261
 Houston, The Convention Special to: 244
 Hoyle, Alexander Edward, F.A.I.A.: 27, 25
 Ingham, Charles T., F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 268
Justement, Louis, architect: Proposed Federal Courts Building, Washington, D. C.: 77, 78
 Keally, Francis, F.A.I.A.: 27, 25
 Kemper Retires, Ed: 262
 Kohn, Robert D., F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 264
 Krimmel, Edmund G.: "Your Solar House": 40
 Kump E.
 Sturgis
 Kump,
 Separating?
 Laird, W.
 John
 Landscap
 by Ch
 Lawrie,
 develop
 as Th
 67, 68
 Library
 archite
 Light, Co
 by Jul
 Loeb,
 Loomis,
 Editori
 Lundie, I
 MacCall
 Furore
 Maginnis
 Gold
 Gold
 Kempe
 Martin,
 25
 "Mechan
 John B
 Meda,
 Medal o
 Memoir
 William
 81, 130
 Morris,
 vention
 ings G
 Mexico C
 244
 Neild, E
 Nelson,
 Queens
 News of
 178, 22
 New Yo
 Fresh
 N. Y.
 New Yo

Vitru-
cation:
Span-
U. S.
21, 222
vention,
A.: 136
vestment
ay, by
Light,
ne: 105
, 24
75
Magin-
75
Archite-
richard:
; 99;
7; by
ary S.

Trib-
25
eopold
"Plan-
al to:
A.: 27,
tribute

posed
hing-

ate to
Solar

Kump Editorial, The, by R. Clipston Sturgis, F.A.I.A.: 185

Kump, Ernest Joseph: Can We Separate Architecture and Planning?: 99

Laird, Warren Powers—1861-1948, by John P. B. Sinkler, F.A.I.A.: 248

Landscape Architecture, The Art of, by Christopher Tunnard: 214

Lawrie, Lee, sculptor: Proposed Development of The Octagon Garden as The Institute's War Memorial: 67, 68

Library of Louvain, Whitney Warren, architect: 173, 174

Light, Color and the Human Machine, by Julian Ellsworth Garnsey: 105

Loebl, Jerrold: Guest Editorial: 195

Loomis, Charles Dana: The Burchard Editorial: 137

Lundie, Edwin H., F.A.I.A.: 27, 25

MacCallum, Ian C.: Diruta Teutonica Furore: 170, 202

Magniss, Charles D., F.A.I.A.: The Gold Medal: 19, 23; Accepting the Gold Medal: 75; Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 266

Martin, George Marshall, F.A.I.A.: 27, 25

"Mechanization Takes Command," by John E. Burchard: 89

Medal, The Fine Arts: 20

Medal of The A.I.A., Gold: 19, 75

Memoirs of Centurian Architects, by William Adams Delano, F.A.I.A.: 3, 81, 130, 180.

Morris, Edwin Bateman: On the Convention Special: 112; What Buildings Give You a Thrill?: 272

Mexico City, Post-Convention Tour to: 244

Neild, Edward Fairfax, F.A.I.A.: 28, 25

Nelson, Otto L.: Fresh Meadows, Queens, L. I., N. Y.: 254

News of the Educational Field: 76, 128, 178, 228, 250

New York Life Insurance Company's Fresh Meadows, Queens, L. I., N. Y.: 254

New York State Competition, A.: 129

Observations at Salt Lake City, Furtive: 91

O'Connor, Robert Barnard, F.A.I.A.: 28, 25

Octagon, Pre-: 66

Oregon State Capitol, The, Trowbridge & Livingston, architects; Francis Keally, associate: 115, 116

Orr, Douglas William, F.A.I.A.: Opening of the Convention: 102; Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 271

Oud, J. J. P.: The United Nations' Headquarters: 278

Palmer, Edward Livingston, F.A.I.A.: 28, 26

Parker, William Stanley, F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 271

Pearson, Charles A., Jr.: "The Professional Fee": 139; "Your Solar House": 185

Philadelphia Looks New York Over, by Beryl Price: 278

Pilafian, Suren: The Architects' Civic Design Group of Metropolitan Detroit: 160

"Planning the Neighborhood," a review by Arthur C. Holden, F.A.I.A., A.I.P.: 229

Poggi C. Godfrey: Time for a Change: 251

Post-Convention Tour A, On, by Henry H. Saylor: 117

Post-Convention Tour B, On, By Catharine and Harold R. Sleeper: 121

Post-Convention Tour to Mexico City: 244

Prefabrication, by Howard T. Fisher: 219

Pre-Octagon: 66

President Orr's Opening of the Convention: 102

Price, Beryl: Philadelphia Looks New York Over: 278

Professional Fee, The, by R. Clipston Sturgis, F.A.I.A.: 14; comment on, by Charles A. Pearson, Jr.: 139

Proposed Development of The Octagon Garden as The Institute's War Memorial: Gilmore Clarke, landscape architect; Lee Lawrie, sculptor: 67, 68

Public Education, An Experiment in, by Charles R. Colbert: 208

Quotations from Howard Robertson, F.R.I.B.A., H. S. Goodhart-Rendel, F.R.I.B.A., G. A. Soilleux, F.R.A.I.A., Hon. Humphrey Pakington, F.R.I.B.A.: 37

Raymond, architect, Office of Eleanor: Entrance Detail: 270

Registration Law Enforcement at the Local Level, by Clinton H. Cowgill: 167

Residential community: Fresh Meadows, Queens, L. I., N. Y.; Voorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith, architects: 254

Robinson, Alexander C., III, F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 268

Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Honolulu, Outdoor Dining-room, Gardner A. Dailey, architect: 125

Russell, Ernest John, F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 265

Saylor, Henry H.: On Post-Convention Tour A: 117

Scholastic Awards: 80

Schultze, Leonard, F.A.I.A.: 28, 26

Scott, Fitzhugh, F.A.I.A.: 28, 26

Seminar Highlights of the Convention: 53

Shurcliff, Arthur A.: "The Boss": 280

Sinkler, John P. B., F.A.I.A.: Warren Powers Laird—1861-1948: 248

Sleeper, Catherine and Harold R.: On Post-Convention Tour B: 121

Small, Philip Lindsley, F.A.I.A.: 29, 26

Smith, Joe Frazer, F.A.I.A.: 29, 26

"Solar House, Your," by Edmund G. Krimmel: 40

Spandrel Wall Construction for U. S. Department of Commerce, System of: Howard T. Fisher, architect: 221, 222

Splitting the Infinitive: 87

Stanton, Glenn, F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 271

Steel Bridge Awards: 235

Sturgis, R. Clipston, F.A.I.A.: The Professional Fee: 14; Church Design: 140; The Kump Editorial: 185; Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 263

Thomas, Charles E.: Must America Be a Church Museum?: 186

Time for a Change, by C. Godfrey Poggi: 251

Tour A, On Post-Convention, by Henry H. Saylor: 117

Tour B, On Post-Convention, by Catharine and Harold R. Sleeper: 121

Trowbridge & Livingston, architects; Francis Veally, associate: Oregon State Capitol: 115, 116

Tunnard, Christopher: The Art of Landscape Architecture: 214

Union Internationale des Architectes, Lausanne, First Congress of The: 126, 128

United Nations' Headquarters, The, by J. J. P. Oud: 278

Van Pelt, John V., F.A.I.A.: Thoughts for a Layman: 39

Vitruvius: A Technical Note On: 13

Voices from Afar: 37

Voorhees, Stephen F., F.A.I.A.: Tribute to E. C. Kemper: 265

Voorhees, Walker, Foley & Smith, architects: Fresh Meadows, Queens, L. I., N. Y.: 254

War Memorial, Proposed Development of The Octagon Garden as The Institute's: Gilmore Clarke, landscape architect; Lee Lawrie, sculptor: 67, 68

Warren, Whitney, architect: Library of Louvain: 173, 174

White, Bolton: Entertaining: 277

White House Theme, The, by Alfred Bender: 88

Williams, Edgar I., F.A.I.A.: Forum's Reporting of the Convention: 136

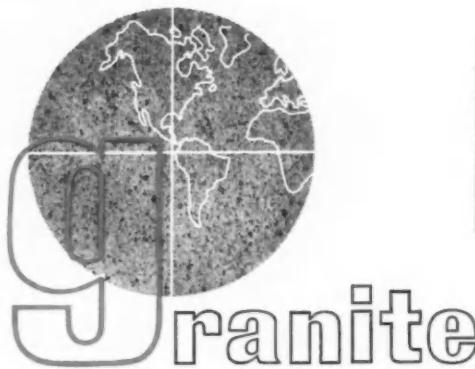
Wood, Hart, F.A.I.A.: 29, 26

Wurster, William W.: Architecture Broadens Its Base: 30

"Your Solar House" by Charles A. Pearson, Jr.: 185

Zantzinger, C. C., F.A.I.A.: In Memory of Paul Philippe Cret: 109

America
Godfrey
Henry
Cath-
121
hitects;
Oregon
Art of
+
itectes,
The:
, The,
noughts
n Fir:
Tribute
Smith,
Queens,
evelop-
den as
Clarke,
awrie,
Library
77
Alfred
orum's
136
tecture
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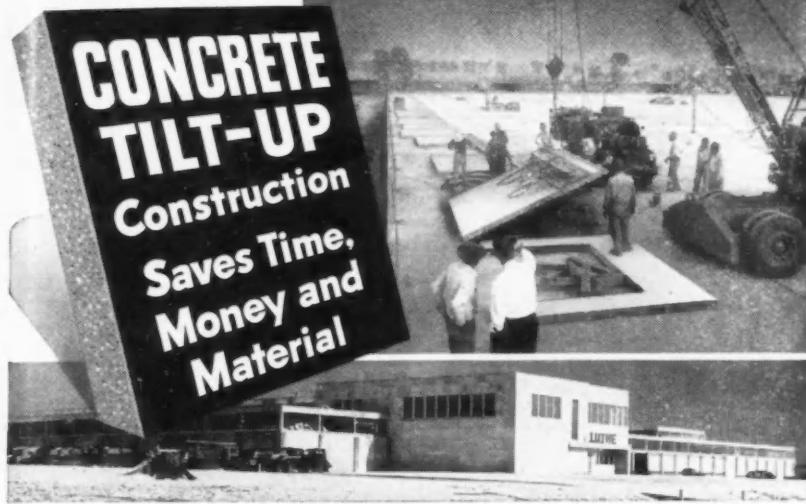
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